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Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued) (A/47/3, A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/83, A/47/132, A/47/212-E/1992/54, A/47/222-E/1992/57 and Corr.1, A/47/225-S/23998, A/47/267, A/47/278-E/1992/77, A/47/283-E/1992/83, A/47/289-E/1992/68, A/47/294-E/1992/84, A/47/338, A/47/375-S/24429, A/47/403, 407, 408, 411, 445, 446, 499 and 627; A/C.2/47/L.2 and L.5)

1. Mr. SUŽIEDELIS (Lithuania), speaking on behalf of the Baltic States, welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on the impact of the evolution of East-West relations on global growth and development (A/47/403), adding that the Baltic delegations associated themselves fully with the statement made by the representative of Poland on that topic. They were somewhat surprised to learn that the report was one of the first to attempt to analyse the spectacular transformation which was affecting a substantial and growing number of States Members of the United Nations. In that and other reports, the dissolution of the former Soviet Union had been portrayed almost entirely in a negative light; the Baltic delegations regretted that those reports had not addressed the long-term positive impact such changes might bring. The Baltic countries could now endeavour to rationalize trade policies and strengthen the comparative advantages of their respective economies, which would henceforth be responsive to global trade patterns. In future greater attention should be devoted to the differences between, and the specific national characteristics of, the countries in transition, particularly the Baltic States and the successor States to the Soviet Union. It was not enough to treat those countries as a single economic unit, or to divide them just into "potentially developing" and "more industrialized" States. The Baltic States were prepared to work closely with United Nations in providing the necessary statistics and information for a more adequate recognition of national characteristics in future studies.

2. Much time had been spent discussing the question of the diversion of assistance away from the developing countries in favour of the economies in transition, but recent studies had concluded that no such diversion was taking place. As had been pointed out earlier, transition must be considered as a problem in its own right, with a full examination of all the aspects of the process. The lessons to be learned from the political, economic and social reforms going on in Central and Eastern Europe would have relevance not only for the countries directly affected, but for the international community as a whole.

3. The development goal enunciated by the Secretary-General at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) of "improvement of human well-being" was central to both the economic and the political transformation of Central and Eastern Europe. The Secretary-General had also suggested that the Economic and Social Council should also address issues which affected international security. The economic policies adopted by the

(Mr. Suziedelis, Lithuania)

countries in transition deserved to be included under that heading. The Baltic States therefore intended to join other countries in introducing a draft resolution in the Second Committee entitled "integration of economies in transition into the world economy".

4. Turning finally to Economic and Social Council resolution 1992/40 on activities of the United Nations system in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Baltic delegations welcomed the establishment of a United Nations presence in their region and the call for an integrated approach to United Nations operations throughout the region of the former Soviet Union. They appreciated the efforts made, in particular, by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

5. Mr. VALENTINO (Malta) welcomed the joint activities of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other international organizations in preparation for the International Conference on Population and Development to be held at Cairo in 1994. Malta intended to establish a national committee to serve as a focal point for preparatory activities and for the Conference itself, and a national report on population issues in Malta was currently under consideration. The issue of family planning programmes, health and family well-being was under consideration in preparation for the International Year of the Family. Malta would be hosting two conferences on the subject in 1993; one would be a regional conference and the other a non-governmental organizations' conference, and both were part of Malta's input for the International Year of the Family.

6. Malta hoped that special consideration would be given at the Conference to the question of population ageing, in view of the dramatic increase in the number and proportion of elderly persons. Malta had recently established the International Institute on Ageing (INIA) to provide training to key personnel within developing countries and to establish a network of collaboration among specialized agencies in both developed and developing countries, as well as to promote exchange of information through regular publications and monographs.

7. The Governing Council of UNDP had emphasized the strong and increasingly clear linkage between population concerns and poverty, the environment and development, and had urged UNFPA to take population concerns fully into account in the follow-up of UNCED. Population growth was directly linked to sustainable development; therefore, successful population programmes, through sound investment in education, health, employment and family planning, would contribute to a reduction of poverty and improve economic and social growth. He hoped that the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development would adopt an effective plan of action. The success of the Conference would depend on what was achieved at the preparatory meetings and on the active participation of Governments, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and experts. He conveyed his Government's gratitude to the Government of Egypt for its offer to host the Conference.

8. Mr. ROTHERMEL (Director, Division for Global and Interregional Programmes, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)), speaking on prevention and control of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), and the response of UNDP to the HIV epidemic within the framework of the global AIDS strategy, said that the first decade of the AIDS epidemic had yielded much research in the social and medical sciences and had also pointed to the ever-increasing array of economic, political, legal and ethical issues which the epidemic presented. HIV was present in virtually every country of the world, and its transmission was facilitated by the increasing movement of refugees, immigration, tourism and international trade. UNDP had been responding to requests for assistance from Governments since the mid-1980s; AIDS occupied a high place on its agenda of development priorities. UNDP had continued to focus on the development dimensions of AIDS within the framework of the World Health Organization/UNDP Alliance to Combat AIDS. Through its field offices, UNDP had provided assistance with integration of national AIDS plans to overall development policies and priorities, resource mobilization, support for programme development and delivery, and minimization of the impact of HIV/AIDS on social and economic development. At the global level, UNDP had been closely associated with WHO in the efforts to develop accessible and affordable drugs and vaccines for developing countries.

9. The direct and indirect costs of the epidemic promised to be enormous. Indirect costs would far exceed those directly related to the provision of treatment and care. The AIDS epidemic claimed those in their most productive years, thereby seriously threatening national economies, particularly those with a single dominant or several key formal sector industries, such as mining, tourism or agriculture, where a dramatic depletion of the workforce or a reduction in productivity could affect the gross national product (GNP), export earnings and public revenue, as well as cause a critical reduction in investment in education and training. The cost of coping with the HIV epidemic could be expected to escalate until it absorbed a significant part of developing nations' budgets. At the household level, there would be a loss of income, assets, savings and productivity, with an increase in health-related expenditures and time spent caring for the sick.

10. The epidemic would place extra burdens on women and on lower-income groups in general. AIDS appeared to spread more readily among the poorer sections of society and imposed relatively larger costs on the poor than on the rich. Globally, prevalence rates among women were catching up with, and, in some cases, were expected to overtake, those of men. Many epidemiological studies continued to study women as commercial sex workers or as sources of infection to their children, to the exclusion of most women's concerns. UNDP had given specific directives to promote prevention, care and support programmes for women.

11. Respect for individuals and their communities was essential if effective and sustainable behaviour change was to be achieved. Community-based organizations were uniquely placed to understand and respond to the challenges that the epidemic engendered. Community-level activities would allow

(Mr. Rothermel)

participants to identify their own specific needs and to ensure that the strategies chosen could be implemented and sustained. UNDP continued to pursue the strengthening of national capacity for collaborative partnerships and working relationships within the United Nations system, in particular with WHO, other donor agencies and non-governmental organizations, including the private sector. It was essential that communities and Governments should be able to respond to the epidemic in a complementary and mutually supportive fashion.

12. Mr. NEBENZIA (Russian Federation) said that there had been an important consensus at the latest session of the Economic and Social Council on the need to make the fullest use of the new international political and economic realities for a thorough reform of the economic and social sector of the United Nations. In that connection, he welcomed the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Enhancing international cooperation for development: the role of the United Nations system" (E/1992/82 and Add.1).

13. An important result of the high-level segment had been the consensus on the need for a rational division of labour among the multilateral financial and trade institutions, in particular the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the United Nations on the basis of their respective comparative advantages. The high-level segment had been successful and should be a feature of future annual sessions of the Economic and Social Council. At its latest session, important moves had been made towards a final elimination of ideological and political conflict from the Council in favour of a constructive search for mutually acceptable solutions.

14. The work of the coordination segment had been fruitful. In a situation of limited resources it was vital to achieve precise and close coordination of the various subdivisions of the United Nations system, not only in order to eliminate duplication, but also to harmonize the principles and objectives of system-wide strategy. Topics for consideration in the coordination segment should have been more carefully selected and there should have been more discussion of issues of concern to a majority of United Nations organizations and institutions in order better to analyse United Nations and intergovernmental coordination mechanisms and make practical recommendations for their enhancement.

15. Effective use should be made of the operational activities segment to harmonize those activities to recent international changes and to the general restructuring of the social and economic sector of the United Nations.

16. He welcomed, in particular, Council resolutions 1992/38 and 1992/40 dealing, respectively, with the Chernobyl disaster and the activities of the United Nations system in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

(Mr. Nebenzia, Russian Federation)

17. His delegation commended the Council on the encouraging progress it had made in reforming the social and economic sector of the United Nations. It concurred with many of the conclusions set forth in the report on the impact of the evolution of East-West relations on global growth and development (A/47/403), in particular, with the view that East-West cooperation was unlikely to impact negatively on cooperation between the West and the developing countries, that the credits provided to the transition economies remained comparatively small when measured against their needs and that increased access to the markets of developed countries was the best form of assistance which the West could offer to the countries in transition. In conclusion, while welcoming the Organization's efforts to assist those countries, he believed that its involvement in assistance efforts could be still further increased.

18. Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia) said that his delegation had welcomed the high-level segment of the Council under its reconstituted format and believed that continuation of that format would stimulate productive dialogue and the further convergence of views. The end of the cold war had brought with it brighter prospects for a more peaceful and humane world order, in a context of increasing consensus on certain key aspects of development. An unprecedented opportunity had thereby been provided for strengthening international cooperation for development and for the eradication of poverty, in which process the United Nations was called upon to play a revitalized role.

19. Those positive developments notwithstanding, the World Economic Survey 1992 painted a grim picture of a world economy in deep recession, stalled development, deepening disparities in international economic relations and the stagnation of the developing countries. Africa had been the hardest hit, while the economies in transition continued to falter and the gap between rich and poor countries to widen. Efforts by developing countries to address their problems had been hampered by the unfavourable international economic environment, which had been rendered still more unpredictable by the integration of the Eastern European countries into the world economy. Joint, concerted action was needed to overcome those problems.

20. Indonesia was convinced of the need for the further restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, with a view to making the system both more democratic and more effective and to building the Economic and Social Council into a powerful instrument for accelerating development and combating poverty. Any further steps in the process of restructuring should, however, be based on General Assembly resolutions 45/264 and 46/235 and should not depart from the democratic principles underpinning the decision-making process of the United Nations.

21. His delegation supported the establishment of closer links between the United Nations system and multilateral financial and trade institutions, and had therefore welcomed the high-level segment of the restructured Council, which had a vital role to play in that process.

(Mr. Wisnumurti, Indonesia)

22. Indonesia fully endorsed the call, made by the Council in its report, for international support commensurate with the more open and liberalized trading policies pursued by many developing countries. It remained fully committed to the successful and balanced conclusion of the Uruguay Round, and called on all the parties concerned, and particularly the seven major industrialized countries, to resolve their differences, pointing out that collapse of the Round would most probably lead to trade war.

23. With reference to operational activities for development, his delegation remained convinced of the continued validity of the provisions of resolutions 44/211 and 46/219 and therefore welcomed the various proposals on the establishment of a better system for the financing of operational activities.

24. He stressed the importance of regional integration and affirmed Indonesia's support for an enhanced role for the regional commissions. He drew attention to the importance attached by the recent Non-Aligned Conference of Heads of State or Government, held in Jakarta, to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, and stressed that population considerations should be fully integrated into all aspects of planning and policy-making, particularly in the light of the interplay between population factors, the pursuit of sustainable development and the safeguarding of the environment.

25. With regard to the situation of Palestine, Indonesia called for the prompt implementation of the Council's resolutions on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli settlements and on assistance to the Palestinian people.

26. In conclusion, he welcomed the new emphasis being placed on social issues as integral to the development process and reiterated the position of the non-aligned movement, as stated at the recent Conference, that the world summit for social development should place people and their social needs at the heart of the work of the United Nations.

27. Mr. YEGOROV (Belarus) said that the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council had provided an opportunity for a most productive dialogue between delegations, senior Secretariat officials and the heads of specialized agencies and international multilateral institutions, and he therefore hoped that such high-level meetings would have a major role in the future work of the Council.

28. The coordination segment had laid the foundations for a useful division of duties between the Council and the General Assembly, while the operational activities segment had helped to harmonize the ongoing operational activities of the United Nations system for development and to synchronize them with the current reforms of the economic and social work of the Organization.

(Mr. Yegorov, Belarus)

29. Among the important decisions taken by the Council at its session, he highlighted resolution 1992/40 on activities of the United Nations in the Baltic States and the Commonwealth of Independent States, which presented a comprehensive approach to the region, taking due account of the national priorities of the countries concerned. In addition, Belarus welcomed resolution 1992/43 on strengthening the role of the regional commissions, as well as resolution 1992/38 on the Chernobyl issue. In his view, the Council had made an impressive contribution to the reform of the social and economic sector of the United Nations.

30. His delegation fully agreed with the view expressed by the Secretary-General in his report (A/47/403) that cooperation between East and West was unlikely to impact negatively on the world economy or, in particular, on the economy of the developing countries and it welcomed current efforts by the United Nations system to assist the countries in transition and called for still more vigorous endeavours in that area.

31. Ms. ASHRAF (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), referring to chapter III (B) of the report of the Economic and Social Council (A/47/3) which discussed coordination aspects related to the prevention of HIV/AIDS, said that the AIDS pandemic was by no means under control, despite all the concerted efforts to that end, and that continued high priority must be given to preventing and combating the disease. The HIV/AIDS discussion during the coordination segment of the Council had greatly enhanced understanding of how the various United Nations organizations could better coordinate their actions to combat the pandemic.

32. She stressed that attention must also be given to the socio-cultural and economic aspects of the pandemic and that a pragmatic and carefully coordinated approach, involving multisectoral national action plans, offered an essential instrument in combating and preventing the disease.

33. She described initiatives undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with a view to combating AIDS through preventive education, in cooperation with the World Health Organization Global Programme on AIDS (WHO/GPA) and with non-governmental organizations. Under its Programme of Education for the Prevention of AIDS, UNESCO had organized regional training measures to develop technical leadership in helping countries plan and implement effective AIDS control strategies.

34. In the area of human and social sciencies, UNESCO had responded to the Venice Appeal, undertaking a range of activities designed to alert the international community to the need to strengthen national programmes to combat AIDS. In addition, efforts had been made to promote the role of women in AIDS education programmes and to combat the spread of the disease among street children, particularly in large African towns.

(Ms. Ashraf, UNESCO)

35. The complacency which had once prevailed in parts of Asia and the Pacific with regard to AIDS had disappeared and AIDS information campaigns had been launched even by countries with very few reported AIDS cases, while all regions showed a marked increase in the involvement of non-governmental organizations in developing AIDS education materials. While lacking the necessary financial and human resources, UNESCO had the will to participate in the global efforts and would endeavour to play a catalytic role in raising the awareness of the international community.

ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING SPONSORSHIP OF DRAFT RESOLUTIONS

36. The CHAIRMAN announced that Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt and Nigeria had become sponsors of draft decision A/C.2/47/L.19 submitted under agenda item 87 (b); Bosnia and Herzegovina and Egypt had become sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.20, also submitted under agenda item 87 (b); and Bosnia and Herzegovina had become a sponsor of draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.17 submitted under agenda item 88.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.